

I am w7hn, a 62 year old ham, retired to Florida from the Seattle area. My ham experience began in the early 70s, before all of the changes began, such as no-code techs, etc.

My point of writing this and sending it out to as many Extra Class AROs is to save what prestige there is left in our licensing structure established long before I became a ham. I believe the onslaught of new people who are of the “instant gratification”, “take a pill for everything” culture has been eroding our licensing structure to enable entry and advancement without putting out the effort. In addition, eliminating the rewards of what we (those that did put out the effort) strived so hard to achieve.

This is what I am asking you to do: Just add CW20 (in my case) to your call. When ever you use your call, whether it be spoken or written, add your CWXX qualification. CW5, CW13 and CW20. Has nothing (now) to do with the license you hold. It has everything to do with the CW expertise which was certified as to have been demonstrated. Most hams are embarrassed to brag about their achievements. The licensing structure was set up to acknowledge this without waiving your hand or shouting out loud how proud you were of your achievements, which you worked very hard for.

I think it's time we (old farts) grab what energy, skill, perseverance we have left and make a stand. We've allowed these changes to take place, when, in my opinion, we should have never let the ARRL talk (or bully) us into it.

I don't know why we (collectively) have allowed these change to happen. My first conclusion is that us older folks don't want to fight anymore. My second conclusion is we are too easily convinced that our historical values are no longer desired by those coming into ham radio. The latter may be true. But I've seen our national education system succumbing in attempts to “dumb down”, and now the Amateur Radio system has followed suit.

Instead of insisting on improvement in basic skills, showing competence by achieving the several levels of licensing, we dumb down the (previously) necessary work and capabilities that have long been highly effective in elevating the intellectual structure in Amateur Radio Operators.

I believe this (no-code hysteria) started with someone in New Zealand, followed by the UK, Canada, and now the ARRL. I don't know for sure, so don't quote me on that. What ever the origin, it started a (seemingly) continuous degradation of Amateur Radio as I have known it for the past 30+ years. This is not about the argument of whether CW is right or wrong, bad

or good, antiquated or usable. It is about hard work, perseverance, achievement, and the recognition due.

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